

Region firmly back in business at ATM

Wrapping up four days of travel trade business, Reed Travel Exhibitions, the organizer of Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2012, which concluded on May 4, reported a healthy increase in visitor numbers, driven by the show's renewed B2B focus and buoyed by positive indicators from the region's tourism sector.

"The 2011 event attracted over 16,000 trade visitors and indicators for this year show an increase of between 7-10%," said Mark Walsh, Portfolio Director, Reed Travel Exhibitions.

The region's leading trade exhibition for travel industry professionals, the 19th edition of the show has also seen a significant rise in decision makers and influencers – up by

35% - from members of its buyers club, hosted delegates, regional and international speakers and hosted luxury travel buyers.

"The initial figures from this year's show are an endorsement of not only Arabian Travel Market's continued relevance and structured focus to the regional travel market, but mirror the rebound in both confidence and business levels across the major industry sectors," remarked Walsh.

Independently ABC-audited, ATM 2012 also recorded a 7% increase in exhibitors for this year's event ahead of the start of the show, with more than 21,000 square metres of floor space hosting over 2,400 exhibitors and 82 new companies.

This increase was also reflected in its international reach with 54 national pavilions and 87 countries represented overall.

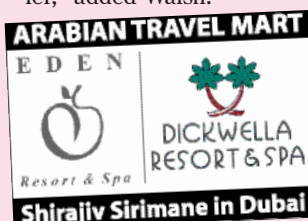
"The business buzz is definitely back, the regional travel industry is an exceptionally buoyant mood and participants are positive and confident. Our decision to reconfigure the floor plan to a more easily navigable and convenient format this year has also helped to facilitate busier appointment schedules," said Walsh.

Walsh's comments were echoed by a wide variety of participants, both regional and international, inbound and outbound, right across the industry spectrum.

"This is my second year

as a visitor and the new layout is definitely easier to navigate. Our focus was the expanding opportunities in apartment accommodation, and I was very impressed to find an entire section dedicated to this," said Cori Terblanche, Travel World, South Africa.

"If we look solely at the European exhibitors for example, floor space has grown from last year and we have seen a surge in interest from destinations eager to attract the affluent Middle Eastern traveler," added Walsh.



Some of the highlights of the event. Pix by Shirajiv Sirimane

